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The Relationship Between Teachers' Perceptions Of Student Management With Out-Of-School Suspensions And High School Graduation Rates

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS'PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT MANAGEMENT WITH OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS'PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT MANAGEMENT WITH OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES

By

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this research to my long family lineage of ambitious women. Starting with my great-grandmother, Lula Pearl who graduated from Eastern Kentucky State College in July, 1957 as an elementary teacher. Following her example in purpose and passion for children, my grandmother, Nancy Jane, who raised and cared for several youngsters. My mother Rebecca Elaine, who currently provides care for others as a nurse, friend and devoted family member . This paper is also dedicated to my daughter, Lydia Beatrice who I envision to follow in our footsteps.

"Education is a fundamental principle of what made America a success. We can't afford to throw any young people away." Benjamin Carson

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I acknowledge my colleagues and mentors throughout my education career. At each stage of my professional growth in education, I have been fortunate enough to work with a team of educators whose motivation has never waned to improve the education experience for all students. That passion and motivation propelled me to invest in my practice and the vocation of education. I am extremely lucky to have worked with people who enjoy what they do every day.

I wish to thank my dissertation committee for their guidance and support; Dr. Reynolds for genuine words of encouragement and validation; Dr. Biggins for his time and availability during the whirlwind; and Dr. James Bliss for his support throughout my studies and his thoughtful feedback at each stage of my learning. Most importantly, I am indebted to Dr. Charles Hausman for his dedication and tireless support through this process as my mentor.

ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS'PERCEPTIONS OF STUDENT MANAGEMENT WITH OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS AND HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES

Teachers' perceptions contribute to who is removed from the classroom (Fenning & Rose, 2007). The Kentucky Department of Education use a teacher self-report instrument called the Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) survey to assess teaching conditions in eight areas to predict teacher satisfaction, employment trajectories and ultimately guide school improvement. The New Teacher Center found a correlation exists between the Managing Student Conduct construct of the TELL Kentucky Survey responses and student achievement (National Teacher Center, 2013). This study investigates the relationship between Managing Student Conduct construct with Graduation Rates and Out-of-School Suspension. Graduation Rate is one of five components that make up the Next Generation of Learners, which encompasses 70% of the Unbridled Learning assessment accountability model (other components include Achievement, Gap, Growth and College/Career Ready). Kentucky Unbridled Learning assessment model is the alternative to the standard NCLB and approved by the U.S. Department of Education. The results of this study found a negative correlation between Managing Student Conduct and Out-of-School Suspension and a weak positive correlation between Managing Student Conduct and Graduation Rates. In addition to the original questions, a post hoc multi-regression analysis was conducted and found that although non-white and poverty were strong predictors of Out-of-School Suspension, poverty was the strongest predictor of Graduation Rates. The results instigate future studies in the areas of cultural responsive teaching, alignment of school expectations and instructional cultural relevancy.

KEYWORDS: graduation rates, dropout, out-of-school suspension, discipline, teacher perceptions, minority students, school enrollment, free and reduced lunch, Kentucky TELL survey, student achievement

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Since the inception of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) by the Bush Administration in 2001, educational institutions have been required to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Across the nation, state schools were mandated to implement a transparent assessment system to measure students' academic proficiency and disaggregate by race, gender, disability and social-economic status (SES). The reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) led to an overhaul of state curricular standards, assessments, instructional practices and a targeted focus on students identified in achievement gaps. Federal funding recipients became accountable to parents whom have the power of school choice if the schools assessment measures exhibit persistently low achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

Unbridled Learning

In 2009, the Kentucky General Assembly enacted Senate Bill 1 (SB 1), which required a new public school assessment program beginning in the 2011-12 school year. School districts adopted the *Unbridled Learning* assessment accountability model for public schools, replacing the Commonwealth Accountability Testing System (CATS), which provided accountability information and a NCLB "score" and a state "score". In February 2012, shortly after the Obama administration announced states could develop an alternative to the standard NCLB model, the U. S. Department of Education approved Kentucky's Unbridled Learning accountability model. The Unbridled Learning accountability model allows Kentucky to report assessment that meet federal and state requirements with one "score" on the School Report Card.

At the high school level, the Kentucky School Report Card's overall score is based on three weighted components: Next Generation Learners (70%), Next-Generation Instructional Programs and Support (20%) and beginning in school year 2014-2015, Next-Generation Professionals (10%). Currently, the Next Generation Learners Score is based on several data sources: Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP); End-of-Course (EOC) exams; ACT, PLAN, EXPLORE; and other non-test measures such as graduation rates, achievement gaps, college/career readiness, and student academic growth. In addition, the School Report Card compiles Learning Environment data regarding teacher qualifications, student safety, and parent involvement and student demographics. Collectively, the School Report Card communicates to the public and parents the school's performance as dictated in the Kentucky regulation 703 KAR 5:140. The 2011-2012 State/District/School Report Cards provided the baseline data from which the state, district and individual schools developed Annual Measurable Objectives (AMO). The AMOs are similar to AYP but are more specific to Unbridled Learning indicators of meeting the goal of "College and/or Career Ready for All" (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013).

Additional information is collected by the Kentucky State Department of Education (KDE) via the TELL (Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning) survey, which assesses teaching conditions in eight areas: Community Engagement and Support; and Teacher Leadership; School Leadership; Managing Student Conduct; Use of Time; Professional Development; Facilities and Resources; Instructional Practices and Support; New Teacher Support (National Teacher Center, 2013). In 2011, the TELL survey was administered electronically to all public school teachers in the state of

Kentucky over a period of four weeks. The TELL survey results are intended to be included in schools' Comprehensive School Improvement Plans (CSIP), which are driven by targeted goals based on data from the School Report Card (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013). The CSIP is the blueprint for schools, districts and states to ensure accountability from all stakeholders to support the efforts to decrease achievement gap and prepare all students to be career and/or college ready.

Graduation Rate: Adjusted Cohort and Average Freshman

Beginning in 2013, Kentucky is now using a more reliable measure of graduation rates called the Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation rate, which allows Kentucky to have intrastate reliability and a corresponding measure with other states. The four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of students who graduate within four years with a regular diploma by the number of students that compose the adjusted cohort for the graduation class. The adjusted cohort for the graduation class is calculated by adding any students who transfer into to the cohort (students entering grade 9 for the first time) later during grade 9 and the next three years and subtracting students who transfer out during the same year (U.S. Department of Education, 2013).

Kentucky was one of the three states that did not report the Four Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation rate for the 2010-2011school year to the U.S. Department of Education. However, the data used in the current survey is the Kentucky School Report Card from 2011-2012 and the Tell Survey from 2011, which represents data collected during 2010

Based on the 2011-2012 Kentucky School Report Card, 77.8% of all students graduated (Kentucky Department of Education, 2013). The Average Freshman Graduation Rate (AFGR) is based on the estimated percentage of students who graduate on time and is calculated by estimating the enrollment of the freshman class and the number of awarded regular diplomas four years later. Kentucky's 2012 AFGR is the actual 2011 AFGR and since data are lagged a year, it represents the 2010 graduation rate. Therefore, only approximately 78% of all high school students graduated on time in 2010.

Out-of-School Suspension in Kentucky Schools

The Kentucky State Report Card also reports Out-of-School suspensions to describe the schools' safety within the learning environment. On the 2012-2013 State Report Card, Kentucky schools suspended 7.5 percent of White students, 24.8 percent of Black students, 6.9 percent of Hispanic students and 1.9 percent of Asian Students. This trend correlates with the overrepresentation of minority students receiving exclusionary discipline consequences on a national level (Gonzalez & Szecsy, 2004; Fenning & Rose, 2007).

Rationale for the Study

The New Teacher Center (NTC) found that a strong correlation exists between the TELL Kentucky Survey responses on the Managing Student Conduct construct and student achievement. Following the Community Support and Involvement construct, Student Conduct was the next highest significantly correlated variable with student achievement as indicated by combined math and reading scores (r=. 313) at the high school level (National Teacher Center, 2013)

During a time when accountability and data driven performance are the crucial funding determinants for states' school systems, statistics should help leaders and policymakers prescribe best practices and interventions. Given the inconsistent outcomes across the state, Kentucky students are not receiving equitable opportunities or equitable treatment. The Kentucky School Report Cards give a plethora of data on students such as academic performance, behavior and demographics, but the report provides minimal information on teachers.

Teachers' perceptions contribute to who is removed from the classroom (Fenning & Rose, 2007), but when school administrators support teachers through collaboration on discipline and through professional development opportunities, out-of-school suspensions decrease (Ohlson, 2009). High school suspension rates are positively correlated with high school dropout rates (Lee, Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2011). One measurable outcome of the strategic efforts to prepare all students for success and college/career readiness is the high school graduation rates.

It is critical to study Kentucky school dropout rate and out-of-school suspension rates as it relates to students academic proficiency and those students who fall in the achievement gap. Students, who are suspended from school miss access to curriculum, perform poorly in the classroom and more likely to dropout (Norguera, 2001; Townsend, 2000; Velez, 1989). Students who do not graduate are more susceptible to a poor Quality of Life, as defined by physical wellbeing, material wellbeing, social wellbeing, emotional wellbeing, and development and activity (Felce and Perry, 1995). There are correlations between high school dropouts and incarceration (Harlow, 2003) and economic hardships (Thorstensen, 2004) for the individual and society.

Problem Statement

The overall state graduation rate does not reflect a homogeneous rate of graduation across the state. The individual school districts' 2012 AFGR vary between 76% (Bullitt County) to 86.1 (Warren County) despite having a comparable enrollment size (approximately 13,000). In addition, graduation rates and the out-of school suspension percentages follow similar trends. For example, Bullitt County percentages of out-of-school suspension on the 2011-2012 school report by race were 7.1% for White students, 23.9% for Black students and 2.2% for Hispanic students; Warren percentages of out-of school suspension on the 2011-2012 school report card by race were 2.4% for White students, 7.6% for Black students and 1.1% for Hispanic students. These examples demonstrate that racial/ethnic minority students have a higher chance of being suspended from school than White students, a pattern found in the national studies (Kremien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006; Kremien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006; Kremien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006; Kremien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006).

These difference in suspension rate by race/ethnicity hold despite school size. For example, Jefferson County's district enrollment per the 2011-2012 is 94,921 and the AFGR is 67.8%. The out-of school suspension rate by race was 9.4% for White students, 27.8% for Black students and 7.5% for Hispanic students. Fayette County's district enrollment per the 2011-2012 is 37,275 and the AFGR is 77.8%. The out-of school suspension rate by race was 8.5% for White students, 34.2% for Black students and 10.0% for Hispanic students. Although district enrollment was different, the racial demographics for each school district were comparable.

The Kentucky 2011 TELL Survey assessed teachers' working conditions in their school and specifically asks their perceptions on managing student conduct. The data from each school's Kentucky TELL survey can be linked to graduation data and out-of-school suspension by matching the data to the School's Report Card. This study investigates the relationship between school characteristics, student characteristics and teachers' perception of student management with graduation rates out-of-school suspension.

Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed:

1. What is the relationship between student characteristics, school characteristics and teacher perceptions of student management with graduation rates?
2. What is the relationship between student characteristics, school characteristics and teacher perceptions of student management with out-of-school suspensions?

The predictors that will be investigated in this study with the exception of Geography are listed in Figure 1.1 Geography was not a variable included due to this study's limited sample size and the high rate of rural districts in the state of Kentucky provides only a small variance.

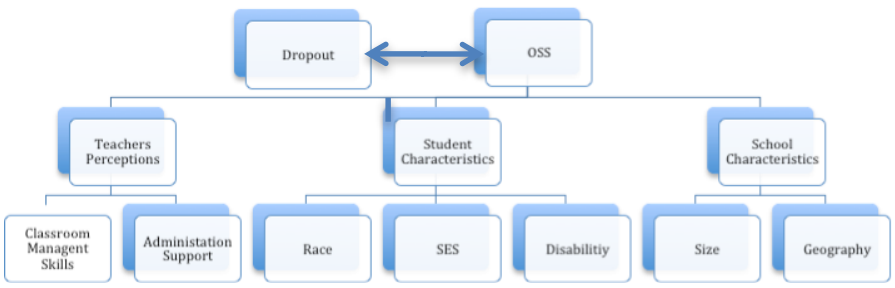

Figure 1.1. Predictors and OSS and AFGR

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

High school begins with the ninth grade year when grades count toward college acceptance, content is expounded upon and structure is less imposed (Newman, Newman, Myers, Smith, & Lohman, 2000). An increase in student population generally means perceived diminishing relationships between teachers and students and students and their peers which impacts self-esteem, mental stability and social anxiety (DeWit, Karioja, Rye, & Shain, 2011). The demands of high school academics increase significantly with content complexity (McCallumore & Sparapani, 2010), while the students' perception of academic supports diminish (Butts & Cruzeiro, 2005) for the individual student. The move from middle school to high school is documented as a major transition in the lives of adolescents as they navigate through formal educational training (Neild, Stoner-eby, & Furstenberg, 2008).

Students who transition to larger high schools may experience academic loss (Alspaugh, 1998) and students that experience low academic achievements tend to never earn a high school diploma (Suh & Suy, 2011). According to The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts (2006) students reported that failing in school, poor preparation for high school, low teacher expectations, less imposed structure and lack of motivation were academic reasons for dropping out. In addition, students who are suspended are more likely to drop out (Velez, 1989; Norguera, 2001; Townsend, 2000) and at-risk for grade retention and involvement in the juvenile justice system (Costendbader & Markson, 1998; King, 1993).

Dropouts

Impact

The forecasts for a high school dropout are a desperate life for the individual and challenging problems for society (Day & Ndwburger, 2002). “An individual’s educational attainment is one of the most important determinants of their life chances in terms of employment, income, health status, housing, and many other amenities” (The Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of America’s Children, 2007, p. 2). Dropouts do not have the earning potential to have a high Quality of Life. The average income for a high school dropout is over 10,000 less than a high school graduate and over 35,000 less than a college graduate.). Poverty limits structured economic opportunities (Tickamey and Duncan, 1990) and correlates with chronic health issues and increased risky health-related behaviors (“Children in Poverty”, 2012).

Society loses human capital when a young person dropouts out of high school and the local education institution is a resource for human capital and can be a non-factor or a major factor in individual promotion. For every male between the ages of 24 and 35 that does not have a high school degree, the estimated loss in tax revenue is $944 billion and costs society, an estimated $24 billion in public welfare and crime (Thorstensen, 2004). Flora and Flora (2013) describe human capital as “the characteristics and potential of individuals determined by the intersection of nature and nurture (education, skills, health and self-esteem)” (p.11).

Another negative outcome is the correlation between incarceration and the drop out rates. In 1997, more than 64 percent of inmates in the nation's state and federal prisons and local jails had not graduation from high school (Harlow, 2003). In *The Consequences of Dropping out of High School*, Suma et. al (2009), reported that 6.3 % of the nation's 16-24 year olds that were intitutionalized in 2006-2007 were high school dropouts who lacked a GED. The report also highlighted that during the 2006-2007 time period 1 out 10 males incarcerated were high school dropouts.

According to the centers for Disease Control and Prevention, teenage pregnancies are associated with high school dropout. Due to the the increased health care, foster care and limited income of teen mothers, teen births cost taxpayers nearly 11 billion dollars in 2008. (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Preganancy reports that children of teen mothers underperform in areas of school readiness and have increased risk of dropping out of high school compared to children of other mothers. Also, school achivement reduces the risk of teen pregnancy-teens who stay in school and plan to attend college are at a lower risk of teen pregnancy. (The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, 2010)

The loss of human capital not only impacts the invididual but also the local economy which ultimately depends on a successful education program for community

At-risk Factors: Race, SES and Disability Interrelated

Demographic factors, which include a students' race, socioeconomic background, gender and disability eligibility under the Individual Disability Education Act (IDEA) are considered risks of dropping out of high school (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990; Rumberger, 1987; Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007; Suh & Suy, 2011; Hess, 2000). The Trends *in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 1972–2009 Compendium Report* found the dropout rate for African American and Hispanic students is twice that of White students and students from low-family income status have dropout rate five times higher than students from high- family income status (Chapman, Laird, Ifill, & KewalRamani, 2011). These findings were based on national *event* dropout rates- event dropout rates are defined by students who did not return to school the following year and did not earn a diploma or GED.

National *status* dropout rate is defined by young people between the ages of 16-24 who are not enrolled and do not have a high school degree. Based on the National status dropout rate, Hispanics have a dropout rate (17.6%) three times higher than Caucasians (5.5%), and almost twice higher than the African American dropout rate (9.3%) (Chapman, Laird, Ifill, & KewalRamani, 2011; Carpenter & Ramirez, , 2007). Amongst students with disabilities, the status drop out rate is double the status dropout rate as their non-disable peers (Chapman, Laird, Ifill, & KewalRamani, 2011; Day & Ndwburger, 2002; Wagner, 1995). students with learning disabilities and emotional/behavior disabilities are among the highest at 30% and 50% respectively (Wagner, et al., 1991).

The Child Trends' calculation of the status dropout percentage rate of youth ages 16-24 by gender in 2012 indicates that out of all the dropouts 55.7% are male and 44.2% are female (Child Trends Data Bank, 2013).

School Characteristics

School size. Another factor influencing high school dropout's rates is school size. Large school enrollment is associated with higher dropout rates. (Lehr, Johnson, Bremer, Cosio, & Thompson, 2004) and lower dropout rates in smaller schools (Werblow & Duesbery, 2009; Cotton, 1996), supporting an earlier study that found dropout rates were double in large schools compared to small schools (Pittman & Haughwout, 1987) However, the dropout rates are significantly higher in larger schools when compared to smaller schools (Rumberger & Thomas, 2000), but there was not a significant difference in dropout rates between small schools and medium schools (Rumerger & Palardy, 2005). Green and Winters (2006) found that by decreasing school size and school districts could increase graduation rates. Large schools also have more disciplinary issues (Heaviside, Rowand, Williams, Farris, & Westat, 1996-97) and correspondingly, suspension rates are higher in urban schools with high enrollment (Skiba R. , Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002)

Geography. Graduation rates are lowest in the largest cities and students who reside in suburban areas are two times more likely to graduate compared to their peers living in urban areas (Swanson, 2008). Rumberger and Thomas (2000) found in their study using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NES:88), that dropout rates were higher in urban schools compared to suburban.

Suh and Suh (2011) investigated the decline in dropout rate over that last three decades using the 1980s and 2000s National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) and found that while a students' demographic factors (race, SES and gender) and suspension were associated with an increase in dropout rate, the students' residence in a metropolitan area were associated with an decrease. (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990; Rumberger, 1987). Whereas race, SES, and gender continue to be the predictors that increase the dropout rate, geographical factors such as region has impacted the dropout trend over the last three decades. In a decomposition analysis, metropolitan high schools in East and North Central regions were found to have lower dropout rates than rural high schools in the South and West Regions. (Suh & Suy, 2011)

Generally, poverty rates are higher in rural areas than urban areas and parents' occupation hardships are the leading cause for rural children living in impoverished conditions (Brown & Swanson, 2003). Coinciding with metropolitan cities and rural impovershed towns are high dropout rates. (Balfanz & Legters, 2004)

Poverty rates are higher in non-metro areas than metro areas and the highest age group living in poverty is rural children at 24.4% (Rural Income, Poverty, and Welfare: Poverty Demographics, 2011). Poverty is the nature of over 50% of our children's environment and for those living in non-metro areas; poverty limits structured economic opportunities (Tickamey and Duncan, 1990) According to USDA, Economic Research Service, 67.6 % of non-metro African Americans are poor and live in high-poverty counties compared to 20% metro African Americans who are poor living in high- poverty counties. However, the trend for the percent of non-metro poor living in high-poverty counties versus the percent of metro poor living in high-poverty county for all races is the

same for other races but not as drastic. For Whites, non-metro is 27% versus metro at 11.9% and for Hispanic, non-metro is 39.6% versus metro at 18.4%.

The following Figure 2.2, shows the adverse consequences of an inequitable education system.

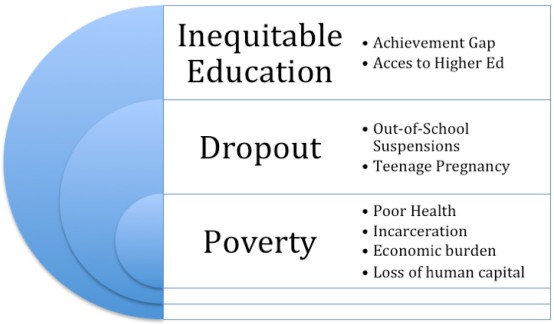

Figure 2.2.The Ripple Effect of Poverty.

Demographics. In addition, to school size and geography, school-wide demographics such as poverty and ethnicity composition are associated to dropout rates. A high percentage of poverty and a low percentage of white students are correlated to an increase in dropout rate (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007; Balfanz & Legters, 2004; Rumberger & Thomas, 2000). However, the effect of school size on minority students' dropout rates is different for Hispanics and African American Students. Although Hispanics have a higher graduation rates in smaller schools than larger schools (Darling-Hammond, Peter, & Milliken, 2006; Greeney & Slate, 2012; Cotton, 1996), there is not a significant difference in graduation rates for African American students (Slate & Jones, 2006; Greeney & Slate, 2012). Smaller schools can mitigate the impact of poverty on school outcomes (Howley & Howley, 2004) and in juxtaposition, large school located in impoverished communities are associated with increase dropout rates (Felter, 1989).

Gardner, Ritblatt and Beatty (2000), found in their study that controlling for SES, smaller schools had lower dropout rates than larger schools.

Out-of- School Suspension

School suspension is the strongest predictor of dropout, (Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007; Suh & Suy, 2011; Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007) and studies have found that student alienation; poor academic achievement and grade retention are strongly associated with school suspension (Constenbader & Markson, 1994; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997). Insinuating a school to prison pipeline for students who experience multiple suspensions and expulsion (Fenning & Rose, 2007).

Students who require disciplinary actions and exhibit deviant behaviors are associated to rates of dropout (Battin-Pearson, Newcomb, Abbott, Hill, Catalano, & Hawkins, 2000; Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007). Out-of-school suspension is a punishment for a range of misbehaviors that violate board policy (assault, drugs, weapons, etc.,) or rules in the school conduct (non-compliance, disruptive behavior, verbal aggression, etc.) however, suspension is not an effective discipline tool (Costendbader & Markson, 1998; McFadden, Marsh, Price, & Hwang, 1992; Skiba R. , 2000). According to the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, the majority of the out-of-school suspensions do not involve dangerous behavior (Brooks, Schiraldi, & Ziedenberg, 1999). Furthermore, studies have found that most common misbehaviors that result in suspension are defiance and disrespect (Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997).

At-risk Factors: Race, SES and Disability Interrelated

Race and Disability. The dropout rate disparity between whites and non-whites and students with disability and their non-disabled peers, mirrors the disproportionate number of minority students (Constenbader & Markson, 1994; Dupper & Bosch, 1996) and the imbalanced number of students with disabilities that are suspended from school (Allman & Slate, 2013). Minority students are suspended at a higher rate than Caucasian students (Costendbader & Markson, 1998; Dupper & Bosch, 1996; Bowditch, 1993), and Losen (2011) reports that suspensions among non-white students have double and the racial discipline gap have tripled since 1972. Studies have found an overrepresentation of African American students (Brooks, Schiraldi, & Ziedenberg, 1999; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2000; Skiba & Peterson, 1999) and specifically, African American males (Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2002).

The frequency of K-12 suspensions increases as the school level increases for all students but for students with disabilities it increases more than five times at the secondary level as oppose to just doubling like their peers without disabilities. In addition, the racial discipline gap grows exponentially (Losen & Martinez, 2013;). In Gonzalez's study (2006), 46% of African American secondary students with disabilities were suspended or expelled at least once during their school years. The over representation of minority students suspended from school is also evident within the group of students with disabilities with a gap of 9.97 percentage points between Black students with disabilities and White students with disabilities between the ages of 3- 21 (Losen, 2011).

Males with disabilities have the highest level of suspension rates at 38 percent compared to their non-disabled male peers at 28% and their female peers with disabilities at 22% (Gonzalez , 2006). Students with emotional and/or behavior disabilities are suspended more frequently than students without disabilities (Morrison & D'Incau, 1997; Mellard & Seybert, 1996; Gonzalez P. , 2006; Krezmien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006). Achilles, Mclauglin and Cronniger (2007) found African American students with learning disabilities were more likely to be suspended compared to students of other races with same disabilities

SES. Student from low SES backgrounds are being suspended more frequently than students from a high SES background (Nicholas, Ludwin, & Iadicola, 1999; Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997; Bowditch, 1993). According to the "Kids Count" data center, in 2012, 23% of children 18 and younger are considered impoverished (living below the poverty level as defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget). In 2012, the breakdown of children living in poverty comprised 40% of Black or African American, 34% of Hispanic or Latino, 15% of Asian or Pacific Islander and 14% of Non-Hispanic or White. In the last five years, African American and Hispanic percentage of impoverished children has increased 6%- double the increase of Asian or White percentage at 3%.

Research highlights conflicting findings whether poverty is a contributing factor or a sole contributing factor. Mendez and Knoff (2003) assert that low SES is not a primary predictor of out-school suspensions alone. In their study, 78% of Black and 72 % of Hispanics were low-SES but fewer Hispanic students received out-school-suspensions. Wu et. al (1982), also found that SES alone is not significantly correlated to

suspension rates but other studies show that poverty is significantly related to high suspension rates when controlling for race and disability. (Achilles, Mclauglin, & Cronniger, 2007; Christle, Jolivett, & Nelson, 2004). However, numerous studies report the significant impact of demographics such as race, SES and gender on suspension rates when combined.

In 2000, the United States Department of Education reported that 71.5% of all suspensions were males (Atkins, et al., 2002). Multiple studies have confirmed the DOE statistics, finding that gender is significantly correlated with suspension rates with a disproportionate number of males receiving out-of-school suspensions (Mendez, Knoff, & Ferron, 2003; Engec, 2006; Skiba R. , 2000). Impoverished, African American males are more likely to be suspended then any other group (Skiba R. , 2000; Kremien, Leone, & Achilles, 2006). School characteristics such as school climate and inconsistent classroom management are possible influencing variables for imbalanced suspension rates (Engec, 2006; Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Townsend, 2000).

Perceptions of School Environment

Student Perceptions

Gregory, Cornell, & Fan (2011)investigated the relationship between suspensions for black and white high school students and school climate. The researchers assessed school-wide climate in regards of school structure and support (authoritative teaching/parenting characteristics) through surveys completed by over 500 ninth graders across of 199 schools in the state of Virginia. The surveys incorporated, The Supportive School Climate Scale of Austin and Duerr (2006), The Academic Press Scale (Midgley et al., 2000) and Experience of School Rules (NCES, 2005) and ascertained the school

climate from the students' perceptions. The schools that were seen *indifferent*- low structure (demandingness) and low support (responsiveness), by students had the largest racial disciplinary gap and schools that lacked *authoritative* characteristics- high support (relationships) and high structure (expectations) had the highest school wide suspension rates for Black and White students. The study did find that school enrollment, poverty, and urbanity were not found to be significant predictors of disproportion suspension rates between Black and White students nor a predictor of Black students suspensions.

Figure 2.3 below illustrates the concept that inequitable education is inherent in school sytems with diverse learners which leades to discipline and academic problems. Those discipline and academic problems can lead to student dropout or inadvertently a push out school

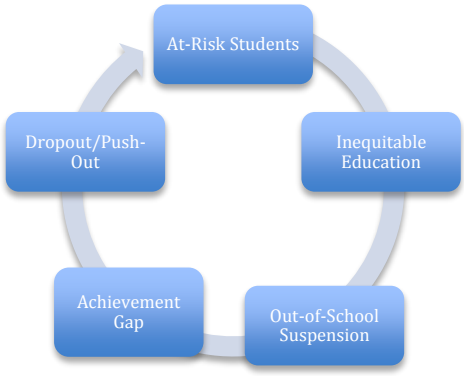

Figure 2.3. The Circular Relationship

Teacher Perceptions

Another study conducted by Gregory & Ripski, (2008) assessed the perception of classroom environment from both students and teachers experiences. High school students that had received in-school suspension referrals completed a survey about their

own behavior using the Defiance Scale and a survey about trust in teacher authority using an adapted trust scale. The teachers rated the referred students using a defiance subscale of the Swanson, Nolan, and Pelham measure (SNAP-IV) and completed a semi-

Structured interview regarding typical discipline problems and their discipline practices. The investigators found that teachers who used a relationship approach to discipline had lower defiance from students and students perceived themselves as more engaged in classroom of teachers that used a relationship approach to discipline. The authors also purport, "…teacher beliefs about discipline may be detectable in how they interact with students" (p. 346). The investigators findings showed an association between teachers who discussed the importance of relationships in discipline practices were more likely to have students who perceived them as trustworthy authority figures.

The reality of the school environment is held by teacher perceptions. A school climate built upon shared values upheld by teachers may influence student learning (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988), and a positive school climate is associated with school effectiveness (Borger, Lo, Oh, & Walberg, 1985). Supporting the importance of teacher perception of student conduct, Gregg (1995), highlighted student discipline and classroom management are primary concerns for high school teachers as oppose to pedagogical content. In addition, classroom management is an area that teachers would like to receive more training (Maag, 2002).

Perception of Administration Support

Newmann and Wehlage (1989), found that a strong sense of school community is linked to small size schools, orderly student behavior, and administrators are responsive to teacher concerns. Specifically, orderly behavior by students is perceived as a critical factor influencing teachers' efficacy. Teachers perceive themselves as a strong influence on student behavior (Tillery, Varjas, & Collins, 2010). Caprara et. al, (2006) found that teachers' with perceived self-confidence in their classroom management capabilities is associated with job satisfaction. For beginning teachers especially, classroom discipline is the perceived most serious problem (Veenman, 1984) and it is also a source of stress and decreased job satisfaction (Turk, Meeks, & Turk, 1982; Burke, Greenglass, & Schwarzer, 1996; Clunies-Ross, Little, & Kienhuis, 2008).

Riehl and Sipple (1996) define school climate as a level of administrative support, teacher influence and autonomy, and collegiality. Also, related to school climate is school community, which is defined by Royal and Rossi (1999)

> "…communication is open, participation is widespread, teamwork is prevalent, and diversity is incorporated. Staff members and students share a vision for the future of the school, a common sense of purpose, and a common set of values. They care about, trust, and respect each other, and they recognize each other's efforts and accomplishments." p. 260.

In a study conducted by Litt and Turk (1985), discipline problems were not a major contributor to stress but role conflict such as, "…amount of work versus quality of

work, job demands versus needs of pupils, and conflicts with school personnel, particularly with colleagues." (p.183). The study also found that teachers who perceived their principals to be aware of the school problems and interested in teachers' welfare and professional development are satisfied with their job (Litt & Turk, 1985). Schonfeld (2001), found that a negative school climate causes poor morale in new teachers shortly after hiring. The lack of supervisor support is also related to a negative work environment, whereas the presence of supervisor support is linked to concurrent self-esteem and future motivation in new teachers (Schonfeld, 2001).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to illuminate relationships in data collected through the Kentucky State Report Cards and the Kentucky TELL Survey. The data banks obtain valuable information on outcomes and perceptions that can provide information that guides strategic planning and interventions. The results of this study will provide insight to the inequities within Kentucky schools.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed:

1. What is the relationship between student characteristics, school characteristics and teacher perceptions of student management with graduation rates?
2. What is the relationship between student characteristics, school characteristics and teacher perceptions of student management with out-of-school suspensions?

Context

The sample size includes 202 Kentucky high schools excluding dependent districts, alternative schools and specialized schools. In order for a school to be included in the sample, they had to be public and grades 9-12. Based on the 2011- 2012 Kentucky State Report Card, the total student population was 649, 688 and 188,770 students were enrolled in grades 9-12. The overall composition of student demographics in Kentucky schools include 14.6% non-white, 51.4 % male and 48.6 % female, and 367,113 students receive Free or Reduced lunch. The overall AGR for the 2011-2012 (actual 2010-2011 due to the one-year lag) graduation rate was 77.8% for the state and 5.3 % students received out-of-school suspensions but 9.3% behavior incidents resulted in out-of-school suspensions.

Data Collection

Kentucky State Report Cards. The Kentucky State and District Report Cards are required by Kentucky statue KRS 158.6453 and regulation 703 KAR 5:140 to report test performance, teacher qualifications, student safety and incorporate addition data as required under the NCLB Act.

TELL Survey. The TELL survey is an online anonymous survey given to every licensed school-based educator to assess teaching conditions at the school, district and state level. The survey is voluntary and can only be taken once. Each school-based educator is given an access code to help keep anonymity; responses cannot be connected to the individual. TELL survey reports are released for schools that reach at least a 50% response rate and a minimum of 5 teachers. Results from the survey provide decision-making data in the areas of facilities and resources, professional development, collaboration and instruction. In addition, the New Teacher Center (NTC) report that teaching conditions, student achievement and teacher retention are positively associated.

Tell survey response. On the 2011 Kentucky Tell Survey, 37,381 (88.9%) Kentucky teachers anonymously self-reported teaching and learning conditions based on eight constructs: Time, Facilities and Resources, Community Support and Involvement, Managing Student Conduct, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, Professional Learning, and Instructional Practices and Support. By school level, 10,341(70.3%) high school teachers responded to the 2011Kentucky Tell Survey and the Average Rate of Agreement on Managing Student Conduct construct amongst the high school teachers was 73%. On the individual statements , which comprise the Managing Students Construct, four out of the seven statements received less that 80% average agreement from high school teachers . The following statements were: "Students at this school follow rules of conduct", 71.4%; School administrators consistently enforces rules for student conduct", 70%; "School administrators support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom", 79.6%; and lastly, "Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct", 77.6%.

Sample

The sample size includes 201 Kentucky high schools excluding dependent districts, alternative schools and specialized schools. In order for a school to be included in the sample and they had to be public and grades 9-12. On the 2011 Kentucky Tell Survey, 10,341(70.3%) high school teachers anonymously self-reported teaching and learning conditions based on eight constructs: Time, Facilities and Resources, Community Support and Involvement, Managing Student Conduct, Teacher Leadership, School Leadership, Professional Learning, and Instructional Practices and Support

Table 3.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total Enrollment	201	101	2107	837.93	428.69
Percent Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	200	.05	.88	.53	.17
Percentage of Non-White Students	201	.30	91.00	13.48	16.00
Percentage of Teachers with	201	18	70	48.24	8.58
Percentage of Teachers with Rank I	201	9	70	33.28	11.49
Average Years of Teaching Experience	201	5.7	17.9	11.72	2.03

Variables and Measures

School characteristics, student characteristics and outcomes for each school included in this study were collected from the 2011-2012 Kentucky School Report Card using the Kentucky Department of Education website. The Learning Environment

section reports students' characteristics and safety information such as out-of-school suspension.

Dependent Variables

Graduation Rate. The graduation rate is determined by AFGR and is reported under the Accountability section of the report card.

Suspension Rate. The suspension rate is the total percentage of students suspended at each school based on the calculation used in Kentucky Report Cards under Safety tab within the Learning Environment section .

Predictor Variables

School size. Total enrollment of each school

Race. Percentage of non-white students

SES. Mean percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch at school.

Disability. Percentage of students receiving services under IDEA

Managing Student Conduct. Teachers' perceptions on managing student conduct is reported on the Kentucky Teaching, Empowering, Leading and Learning (TELL) survey every year. The TELL survey is an on-line survey about the working conditions of Kentucky schools and completed anonymously by public teachers from across the state. Managing student conduct is one construct of the eight assessed. Managing student conduct asks educators to rate their level of agreeability using a likert on seven statements. The liker scale is a mean score for all teachers at a school at the

school level. The likert scale ranged from “Strongly disagree”, “Disagree” , “Agree”, and “Strongly agree”.

1. Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.
2. Students at this school follow rules of conduct.
3. Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty.
4. School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.
5. School administrators support teachers’ efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.
6. Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.
7. The faculty works in a school environment that is safe.

Table 3-2 Reliability of Managing Student Conduct

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.961	7

Research Design

Secondary data obtained from the 2011-2012 Kentucky School Report Cards and the 2011 Kentucky Tell Survey will be analyzed with simple linear regressions. Specifically, the secondary data includes: graduation rates, out-of-school suspension rates, percent of students who receive free/reduce lunch, percentage of non-white students, percentage of students with Individual Education Plans (IEP), total enrollment, and the mean scores of teachers' perceptions of managing student conduct as report on the 2011 TELL survey.

Reliability and Validity of TELL Survey

The Tell survey was analyzed for construct validity using a statistical measurement model called the Rasch Rating Scale Model and National Teacher Center reports "that the TELL survey holds up to a number of tests of its technical validity" (National Teacher Center, 2011, p. 3). Construct validity means that survey questions measure the eight constructs . Survey reliability means the survey has internal consistency. Cronbach's alphas were calculated on the eight major constructs of the TELL survey to test reliability. Each of the constructs had an alpha coefficient above 0.848. Specifically, Managing Student Conduct was reliable with an alpha at .904 (National Teacher Center, 2011).

Data Analyses

Descriptive statistics were calculated including the means and standard deviation of graduation Rates, out-of-school suspension and the TELL survey managing student conduct responses. Simple linear regressions are employed to determine if teacher

perception of managing student conduct, school characteristics (size) and student characteristics (SES, race and disability) predict graduation rates and out of school.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation to this is the reliability of self-report by the students and the teachers. At the high school level, students don't apply for free and reduce lunch. High school students may choose not to turn in the form, may bring their own lunch or may be enrolled in a co-op class and eat off school grounds. The percentage of students that qualify for free and reduce lunch is most likely under-represented on the Kentucky School Report card. The Tell Survey data are self-reported based on the individual's perception and may not reflect reality.

Another limitation of this study is the use of school level data and all schools are counted as equal. School level data mask individual sentiments.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The purpose of this research was to determine if a correlational relationship exists between student characteristics, school characteristics, and teacher perceptions with graduation rates and out-of-school suspension in the state of Kentucky's public high schools; specifically, teacher perceptions towards students' code of conduct.

Review of Data Collection and Analysis

Secondary data obtained from the 2011-2012 Kentucky School Report Cards and the TELL Survey. The secondary data included: graduation rates, out-of-school suspension rates, percent of students who receive free/reduce lunch, percentage of non-white students, total enrollment, and the mean scores of teachers' perceptions of managing student conduct as report on the 2011 TELL survey.

Descriptive statistics were calculated including the means and standard deviation of graduation Rates, out-of-school suspension and the TELL survey managing student conduct responses. Simple linear regressions were employed to determine if teacher perception of managing student conduct, school characteristics (size) and student characteristics (SES, race and disability) predict graduation rates and out of school.

Teachers' Perceptions with Suspension and Graduation

The means of managing student conduct taken from the 2011 TELL Survey consists of seven statements. Managing student conduct asks educators to rate their level of agreeability using a likert on seven statements. The liker scale is a mean score for all

teachers at a school at the school level. The likert scale ranged from “Strongly disagree”, “Disagree”, “Agree”, and “Strongly agree”. (see Table 4.1)

Table 4.1 Means of Managing Student Conduct Items

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The faculty works in a school environment that is safe.	201	3.19	.28
School administrators consistently support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.	201	2.92	.42
Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty.	201	2.92	.29
Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.	201	2.89	.36
School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	201	2.63	.46
Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	201	2.60	.28
Students at this school follow rules of conduct.	201	2.55	.39

Using descriptive statistics, the mean percentage of students suspended (M =9.82, SD = 6.19) from 201 Kentucky public high schools (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2 Mean Percentage of Students Suspended

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Percentage of Students Suspended	201	.00	34.27	9.82	6.19

There was a statically significant correlation (p-.001) between Managing Student Conduct with Percentage of Students Suspended. As the Managing Student Conduct construct mean increases towards "strongly agree", the Percentage of Students Suspended decreases. (see Table 4.3)

Table 4.3 Correlation of Managing Student Conduct with Students Suspended

Correlations

		Percentage of Students Suspended
Managing Student Conduct		-.240
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
		201

When each of the seven items within the Managing Student Conduct construct were assessed individually for correlational relationship with Percentage of Students Suspended, only three of the seven items presented as statically significant. (see Table 4.4). The mean for statement, "Students at this school follow rules of conduct." , was the

strongest predictor of out-of-school suspension (r= -.372, p= .000), followed by, “The faculty work in a school environment that is safe.”, (r= -.313, p= .000), and “Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.”, (r= -.257, , p= .000). The other four items are unrelated.

Table 4.4 Correlations of Managing Student Conduct Items with Students Suspended

Correlations

		Percentage of Students Suspended
Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.		-.257
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		201
Students at this school follow rules of conduct.		-.372
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		201
Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty.		-.145
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040
		201
School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.		-.165
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019
		201

Table 4.4 (continued).

		Percentage of Students Suspended
School administrators consistently support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.		-.188
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008
		201
Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.		-.078
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.270
		201
The faculty works in a school environment that is safe.		-.313
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
		201

The next set of analysis explored correlations between Managing Student Conduct and Graduation Rates. Using descriptive statistics, the mean high school graduation rate (M=78.93, SD = 8.80) was calculated (see Table 4.5) from 201 Kentucky public high schools.

Table 4.5 Mean Graduation Rates

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Graduation Rate	201	40	100	78.93	8.80

The results of a linear regression analysis between Managing Student Conduct and Graduation Rates show a weak relationship (r = .207, p = .003) (see Table 4.6).

Table 4.6 Correlation of Managing Student Conduct with Graduation Rates

Correlations

		Graduation Rate
Managing Student Conduct		.207
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
		201

However, when the seven items within Managing Student Conduct construct are analyzed individually with Graduation rates, one item shows a moderate correlation and two show a weak correlation. The item, "Students at this school follow rules of conduct.", has a moderate positive relationship with graduation rates (r =.310, p =.000). "Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct." (r = .230, p = .001) and "The faculty work in a school environment that is safe." (r = .241, p = .001), show a weak positive correlation. There is no correlation between remaining items and graduation rates (see Table 4.7).

Table 4.7 Correlations of Managing Student Conduct Items with Graduate Rates

Correlations

		Graduation Rate
Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.	Pearson Correlation	.230
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	201

Table 4.7 (continued).

		Graduation Rate
Students at this school follow rules of conduct.	Pearson Correlation	.310
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	201
Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty.	Pearson Correlation	.139
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.050
	N	201
School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	Pearson Correlation	.143
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.042
	N	201
School administrators consistently support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom.	Pearson Correlation	.184
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009
	N	201
Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	Pearson Correlation	.054
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.447
	N	201
The faculty works in a school environment that is safe.	Pearson Correlation	.241
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001
	N	201

The results of the single linear regression model between Percentage of Students Suspended with Graduation Rates show a statistically significant negative correlation (r = `.475, p = .000) (see Table 4.8)

Table 4.8 Correlations of Percentage of Students Suspended with Graduation Rates

Correlations

		Graduation Rate	Percentage of Students Suspended
Graduation Rate	Pearson Correlation	1	-.475**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	201	201
Percentage of Students Suspended	Pearson Correlation	-.475**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	201	201

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Student characteristics, school characteristics and teacher perceptions as predictors of out-of-school suspension. As a whole, these predictors account for 32.6% of variance in Percentage of Students Suspended (R^2 =.316, p = .000) (see Tables 4.9 and 4.10)

Table 4.9 Probability of Variance of Percentage of Students Suspended

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.562[a]	.316	.302	5.15974

a. Predictors: (Constant), Percentage of Non-White Students, Percent Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch, Managing Student Conduct, Total Enrollment

Table 4.10 Regression of Students Suspended with Predictors

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2400.348	4	600.087	22.540	.000[b]
	Residual	5191.465	195	26.623		
	Total	7591.813	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Percentage of Students Suspended

b. Predictors: (Constant), Percentage of Non-White Students, Percent Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch, Managing Student Conduct, Total Enrollment

Managing Student Conduct, Percent Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch and Percentage of Non-White Students are significant predictors of Percentage of Students Suspended. There is a positive relationships between the two predictors low SES and minorities with out-of-school suspension and an inverse relationship between perception of student behavior and out-of-school suspension. The higher the free and reduced lunch enrollment and minority students, the higher out-of-school suspension. The lower the agreeability amongst the teachers regarding managing student behavior, the higher out-of-school suspension. The most powerful to least powerful predictors are Percentage of Non-White Students ($\beta = .381$), Percent Eligible for Free/Reduce Lunch ($\beta = .318$) and Managing Student Conduct ($\beta = -.140$). Total Enrollment is a non-significant predictor ($p = .369$). (see Table 4.11)

4.11 Coefficients of Students Suspended with Predictors

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	9.919	4.059		2.444	.015
	Managing Student Conduct	-2.670	1.157	-.140	-2.308	.022
	Total Enrollment	-.001	.001	-.064	-.900	.369
	Percent Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch	11.763	2.537	.318	4.637	.000
	Percentage of Non-White Students	.147	.025	.381	5.938	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Percentage of Students Suspended

Student characteristics, school characteristics and teacher perceptions as predictors of high school completion. As a whole, these predictors account for 27.7% of variance in Graduation Rates (R^2 =.277 p = .000) (see Tables 4.12 and 4.13)

Table 4.12 Probability of Variance in Graduation Rates

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.526[a]	.277	.262	7.573

a. Predictors: (Constant), Percentage of Non-White Students, Percent Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch, Managing Student Conduct, Total Enrollment

Table 4.13 Regression of Graduation Rate with Predictors

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4282.868	4	1070.717	18.671	.000[b]
	Residual	11182.476	195	57.346		
	Total	15465.344	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Graduation Rate

b. Predictors: (Constant), Percentage of Non-White Students, Percent Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch, Managing Student Conduct, Total Enrollment

Total Enrollment, Percent Eligible for Free/Reduced Lunch and Percentage of Non-White Students are significant predictors of Graduation Rate. There is an inverse relationship between the school size, low SES and minorities with high school completion . The lower the school enrollment, free and reduced lunch enrollment and minority students, the higher probability of high school completion. The most powerful to least powerful predictors are Percent Eligible for Free/Reduce Lunch (β = -.435) Percentage of Non-White Students (β = -.220), and Total Enrollment (β = - .219). Managing Student Conduct is a non-significant predictor (p = .130). (see Table 4.14)

Table 4.14 Coefficients of Graduation Rates with Predictors

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	89.254	5.957		14.984	.000
	Managing Student Conduct	2.581	1.698	.095	1.520	.130
	Total Enrollment	-.005	.002	-.219	-3.000	.003
	Percent Eligible for Free/Reducaed Lunch	-22.957	3.723	-.435	-6.167	.000
	Percentage of Non-White Students	-.121	.036	-.220	-3.327	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Graduation Rate

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

As outlined in the introduction, a large body of research has illuminated that both student characteristics and school characteristics influence obtainment of a high school diploma (Balfanz & Legters, 2004; Carpenter & Ramirez, , 2007; Chapman, Laird, Ifill, & KewalRamani, 2011; Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007; Felter, 1989; Gleason & Dynarski, 2002; Jordon, Lara, & McParland, 1996; Murray & Naranjo, 2008). The overarching theme of this investigation confirm that improvised students and minority students in Kentucky are less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to be suspended from high school. The data also indicates that as the percentages of students suspended in Kentucky increase, the graduation rate in Kentucky decreases.

Study Findings

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between student characteristics, school characteristics and teacher perceptions of student management with graduation rates? An ANOVA analysis showed that school size, managing student conduct, minority status and low SES, collectively predicts the probability of the obtainment of a high school diploma in the state of Kentucky ($R = .526$, $p = .000$). Upon closer examination at the coefficients individually, only a three had a significant impact on graduation rate. The percentage of eligible students for free/reduce lunch was the strongest predictor ($\beta = -.435$, $p = .000$) of Graduation Rate and over twice as influential as Percentage of Non-White Students ($\beta = -.220$, $p = .001$) and total enrolment ($\beta = -.219$, $p = .003$). Students from low SES were considered the most at-risk for dropping out of high school. School size had a weak negative correlation with high school completion, which given the school demographics of Kentucky, this researcher is curious if the school

size is more a reflection of geography (rural vs. metro); given the research aforementioned in the literature review, majority of rural areas are impoverished compared to metro areas. (Suy, 2011). In Kentucky, 85 of the 120 counties are considered rural (United States of Department of Agriculture, 2013) and 26.5 % of our kids live in poverty (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013). In this study, school size does not mitigate the effects of poverty, countering Howley & Howely's (2004) results, therefore a future question would be "Does geography exacerbate or mitigate the effectives of poverty?"

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between student characteristics, school characteristics and teacher perceptions of student management with out-of-school suspensions? An ANOVA analysis showed that school size, managing student conduct, minority status and low SES, collectively predicted the probability of out-of-school suspension ($R = .562$, $p = .000$). Only three predictors individually display statistically significant correlation with Percentage of Student Suspended. Percentage of Non-White Students ($\beta = .381$, $p = .000$) and Percentage of Eligible Free/Reduce Lunch Students ($\beta = .318$, $p = .000$) has a moderate positive relationship with out-of-school suspension following the national trend of who is suspended from schools. (Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007; Petras, Masyn, Buckley, Ialongo, & Kellam, 2011; Raffaele Mendez & Knoff, 2003) The predictor Total Enrollment was not a statistically significant predictor, indicating that whether or not the high school is low enrollment or high enrollment, is not a risk factor for the percentage of students suspended from school. Managing Student Conduct ($\beta = -.140$, $p = .022$) had a weak but statistically significant negative correlation to out-of-school suspension. The fewer teachers agree to the items on the Managing

Student Conduct construct, the more likely the percentages of students were suspended from school.

It can be inferred that students culturally different or in the minority demonstrated behaviors that school deem an expulsive offense. As stated earlier in the literature review, the cause of the students suspended can range from board violations (weapons, drugs, fights) to code of conduct violations (profanity, insubordination, disrespect) (Raffaele Mendez & Knoff, 2003). This researcher is curious if the staff demographics reflect the students' demographics and the nature of the behavior infraction, which resulted in a suspension. Based on the teachers' perception of Managing Student Conduct, schools that have teachers who believe student conduct is not well managed, are the schools with students that exhibit expulsive behaviors. This findings pose additional questions regarding the circumstance in which school expectations are developed, delivered and enforced. Do the students not know the school/classroom expectations? If the students know the expectations, are the expectations aligned with home values and share beliefs? Are the expectations taught in accordance with the school context and do teachers and administrator enforce these expectations consistently to all students?

Post-Hoc: TELL Survey- Managing Student Conduct Construct. Based on the results of this study, it appears that Managing Student Conduct construct is a more powerful predictor of the Percentage of Students Suspended ($r = -.240$, $p = .001$) than the Graduation Rate ($r = .207$, $p = .003$). Precisely, among the seven statements within the Managing Student Construct, only three statements significantly correlated with student suspension rate and the high school completion rate. Interestingly, the same three statements: "Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct." (M=

2.89, SD = .36); "Students at this school follow rules of conduct." (M = 2.55, SD = .39); and "The faculty work in a school environment that is safe." (M = 3.19; SD = .28); were the most powerful predictors with both dependent variables. The seven items that made-up the Managing Student Construct was coded for perceptions, which were considered internal to teacher control or external to teacher control. The three statements mentioned above as significantly correlated with the dependent variables, Percentage of Students Suspended and Graduation Rates, were coded as external. The other four statements, "Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty." (M= 2.92, SD = .29); "School administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct." (M= 2.63, SD = .46); "School administrators consistently support teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom." (M= 2.92, SD = .42); and "Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct." (M= 2.60, SD = .26), were coded as internal to teacher control and were not correlated with the dependent variables.

Based on the correlations of Managing Student Conduct Items with Percentage of Students Suspended, it can be interpreted that teachers who self reported that students in their school did not follow school rules -worked in schools with higher rates of suspension (r = -372, p = .000). Teachers who felt they taught in an unsafe environment - worked in schools with higher rates of suspension (r =. -313, p = .000) and teachers who believed that students do not understand expectations - work in a school with higher suspension rates (r = .257, p = .000). Based on this study's results, it can also be concluded that the minority and impoverished students are most like to be suspended and their teachers assume they do not understand the rules nor follow the rules (see Table 4.11) and subsequently less likely to graduate (see Table 4.8)

The correlations between Managing Student Conduct items and Graduation Rate present similar results to the other dependent variable Percentage of Students suspended but not in magnitude. Based on the responses of the teachers from the TELL Survey, teachers who agree that students follow schools rules, also work in schools with a higher graduation rate ($r = .310$, $p = .000$). There is also a weak but statistically significant correlation between graduation rate and teachers who report that their school is a safe environment ($r = .241$, $p = .001$) and the students understand school rules ($r = .230$, $p = .001$). It can be concluded that not only students' scholastic skills correlate with high school success, but also their ability to understand and follow school expectations as perceived by their teachers.

Implications

Cultural Social Dominance Approach

The multiple regression analysis showed that race was the most powerful predictor of out-of-school suspension ($\beta = .381$). A school with predominately white educators inherently creates a culture based on white middle-class systems, expectations and social norms, which reflect a white middle-class home environment. As evident of the recruiting efforts to hire minority teachers in the state of Kentucky and across the nation, Kentucky and American schools are predominately led by white educators in administration and white females in the classroom (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

> *The luxury of ignorance allows many dominant culture educators to remain unaware of the intense "socio-cultural misalignment between home and school" (Comer, 1988, p. 44) that is experienced by students from poor and racially diverse backgrounds. Even for those children of*

> *color who are successful, school is often experienced as a foreign environment (Aronson, 2004; Steele, 2004).....On the other hand, for me and for most of my White middle-class colleagues, the neighborhood school in the suburbs was a direct reflection of our home environment.* (Howard, 2006, p. 120).

Social Dominance can also be viewed from a gender context as well. In an example from The Future of Affirmative Action: Reclaiming the Innovative Ideal by Sturm and Guiner, female law students did not feel comfortable meeting with their professors outside of class, nor participating in class discussion. The class culture did not enable equal participation from both male and female students, despite the uniform treatment to both sexes. "The existing culture normalizes only one approach to performance and, in the process, reinforces the capacity of some people to be fairly evaluated and to perform" and "Sameness may not be fairness in this context" (1996, p. 985). Although, this study did not investigate the relationship between gender and Out-of-School Suspension and Graduation Rate, the line of reasoning follows that the culture of a classroom or school may be based on the values and social norms of the school leaders as oppose to the student population. The students that come from a different background from those in charge, may experience defeat the moment they walk through the school or classroom doors.

Minority students that resist schooling are associated with acculturative adjustment problems in school and experience a cultural distance between home and school, Jacob and Jordan, 1993. Despite, high-aspirations of minority families and communities, the structural discrimination contribute to the underachievement of

minority students. Structural discrimination in the classroom from the minority side, such as the language used in the teachers' instructions, the structuring of school tasks based on the teacher's social and/or cultural background may exclude diverse learners (Phalet, Andriessen, & Lens, 2004).

Poverty was the strongest predictor of high school completion in this study. A student who is eligible for free/reduce lunch family's values may different greatly from their teachers' values, impacting their ability to understand and follow the classroom or school wide norms and expectations. Cultural Responsive Teaching (CRT) involves delivery of instruction using pedagogical approaches that incorporates characteristics of diverse learners' cultural background within the students' frame of reference based on personal experience and perspective (Gay, 2002). Diverse learner's cultural background includes learning styles, communication styles, socializations, traditions, and values.

For example, at this researcher's school, an African American female student who qualifies for free/reduced lunch took an apple in a Styrofoam container from the lunch line. Once at the cashier, the cafeteria worker told her that she would be charge extra for the apple (based on the definition of a complete breakfast which meets specific caloric and nutritional guidelines). The student put the apple in the Styrofoam bowl back where she got it form. The Caucasian female cafeteria manager, harshly corrected her that if you "touch it, it is yours". The now agitated student yelled back and left the cafeteria.

I received the referral for her disrespectful behavior and non-compliance. When I conferenced with this student who is a senior with a part-time job and attends Certified Nursing Certification vocation program, she explained that she did not know the rule. She stated, "In my house, we don't waste food". Still agitated, she went on to say, "Last

year or my first year here, I would have cussed her out- she is lucky I didn't go-off on her". I agree with her comment. Fortunately the young lady's maturity has allowed her enough self-regulation to manage her emotions and make good choices following her feeling of being accosted. The student also shared with me, in her own words, how valuable the vocational program was to her and she did not want to mess that up and fall behind in her classes.

I took this "teachable moment" to explain the reasoning behind the rule the cafeteria manger was enforcing and alternative ways to respond. We discussed social skills such as tone, facial expressions; gestures and word choice. Using business appropriate mannerism, the student could have self-advocated instead of negatively reacting by a) asking why the apple is an extra charge; b) explain personal perspective that the apple was not handled, only the Styrofoam bowl was touched; c) since the rule was unknown, are there alternatives to throwing it away? The non-academic "school appropriate" behaviors many times are not taught in school but are expected which force students to learn through negative interactions further disengaging students.

Positive Based Supports

The descriptive statistics of my study show that students are being suspended multiple times (5.3% of the students are responsible for 9.3% of the behaviors), which validates earlier research that suspension does not change behavior (Costendbader & Markson, 1998; McFadden, Marsh, Price, & Hwang, 1992;). However, literature supports school-wide pro-social behavior supports (Sugai & Horner, 2002; Putnam, Horner, & Algozzine). Establishing consistent and shared school wide expectations removes ambiguity in the learning environment and eliminates assumptions about

expected behavior. One way to align teacher and student expectations is to teach expectations and the social skills to meet those expectations (Burke, Ayres, & Hagan-Burke, 2004). As mentioned early, the teacher responses that had the most powerful correlation with out-of-school suspension and graduation rates, were those that were student driven. For example, "Students at this school follow rules of conduct." and "Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct." Schools cannot choose the demographics of their students, but they can provide an effective "host environment" that establishes consistent systems and procedures that both staff and students can follow (Sugai, et al., 2000). The "host environment", should state clear expectations along with teaching and practicing the pro-social behaviors and providing positive or corrective feedback. (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Literature supports the ineffectiveness and the inherent discriminatory practices of reactive punishment for behavior infractions such as exclusionary consequences (Atkins, et al., 2002). Prevention based practices focus on creating school-wide structures, routines and practices that promote pro-social behavior for the majority of the students across settings. Frameworks such as PBIS, High Five and CHAMPS, emphasize systematic procedures to evaluate the schools needs, implement evidence-based practices, link academic and behavior outcomes and continual assessment of data. The mean agreement data on the managing student conduct construct shows a relatively low mean for teachers consistently enforcing school rules. Pro-social school-wide programs such as the ones mentioned above, contain fidelity systems to oversee fidelity to manage consistency and integrity of the school-wide structure.

The results that emerged from this correlational study between the school demographics and school characteristics with out-of-school suspension (Costendbader & Markson, 1998; Losen & Martinez, 2013; Skiba R. , Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2000; Sullivan, Klingbeil, & Van Norman, 2013) and high school drop out (Battin-Pearson, Newcomb, Abbott, Hill, Catalano, & Hawkins, 2000; Balfanz & Legters, 2004; Ream & Rumberger, 2008; Stillwell & Sable, 2013; Suh, Suh, & Houston, 2007) mimic previous studies mentioned in the literature review. However, this study in addition to school demographics and school characteristic, this investigation also looked at teachers' perceptions regarding management of students' discipline with out-of-school suspension and high school completion. The outcome of this predictor, Managing Student Conduct, on the Percentage of Students Suspended and Graduation rates, pose interesting conclusions and additional questions.

Future Research

Currently, schools have the option to implement Positive Based Intervention Supports (PBIS), which is a school-wide proactive behavior program that focuses on the fidelity of school systems and best practices (Sugai & Horner, 2002). It would be interesting to conduct a correlational study between the schools that implement PBIS and the ones that do not. Does the PBIS program reduce the school's overall percentage rate of suspensions and if there is a reduction in suspension, is there an increase in graduation rate? PBIS requires that students are taught the rules and expectations (previously agreed upon by staff, students and parents), demonstrate understanding and through systematic evaluation and data based problem solving, the school problem areas are identified. The current research regarding PBIS and academic outcomes are limited in scope and require

additional replicated studies to support the linkage to secondary school academic outcomes. (Putnam, Horner, & Algozzine)

Another area to explore as it relates to student outcomes is teacher characteristics such as years of experience, Professional Development (time and type) and demographics. Kentucky schools are implementing a new teacher evaluation under the Teacher Professional Growth Evaluation System (TPGES). In order to measure teacher effectiveness, the Kentucky State Department of Education adopted Charlotte Danielson's Framework for Teaching to guide and organize the professional practice into four domains: Planning and Preparation; Classroom Environment; Instruction and Professional Responsibility. (Kentucky Department of Education, 2014). All the data collected through the TPGES will be stored in the Continuous Instructional Improvement Technology System (CIITS.) In addition to housing the teacher evaluation information, CIITS, will house student-level demographics and provide educators access to connect student performance with teacher effectiveness (Kentucky Department of Education, 2014). Investigators can use this warehouse of student and teacher demographics to study correlations with student outcomes based individual level data as oppose to school level data.

Lastly, it is the hope of this researcher, that this study will start conservations at the local level. My research adds to the current body of literature confirming that school demographics and characteristics impact students' high school experience, however, smaller schools, cultural responsive teaching and pro-social discipline only highlight the complexities of this topic. This study only looked at four variables that are associated with out-of-school suspension and graduation rates but there are many other variables-

which I acknowledge, is the limitation of this broad study. The recommendations from this research are couched for state-level results, but the embedded recommendation is to follow-up with local inquiries at the school level.

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Caryn L. Huber

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Education:

Bachelor's of Arts-University of Kentucky; 1995.

K-12 Learning and Behavior Disability (LBD) Certificate- University of Kentucky; 1998.

Master's of Arts-College of Notre Dame; 2005.

Doctorate of Education - Eastern Kentucky University; 2014.

Certifications:

Provisional Certificate For Teachers Of Exceptional Children--Learning And Behavior Disorders, Grades K-12, Rank 1

Professional Certificate For Instructional Leadership Supervisor of Instruction, Level 2

Administration Experience:

Fayette County Public Schools-Lexington, KY

Dean of Students (8/13 to Present)

- Lead the school disciplinary committee (Positive Based Intervention Supports).
- Lead the school behavioral Multi-tiered Support System (MTSS).
- Resolve discipline problems; confer with parents, teachers, counselors, support service personnel, and students on matters of discipline and welfare.
- Analyze behavioral data; present findings and trends to staff.
- Provide program supervision to the school's Special Education Department.
- Provide program supervision and development support to the school's continuum of environmental behavior supports (SAFE, ISS, SAP and OSS).
- Create and present Professional Development modules to staff.

Youth in Transition-Baltimore, MD

Director of Education (7/07 to 7/10)

- Provided administrative leadership to staff as well as day to day program management; Supervision of certified and classified staff
- Conducted in-service to train staff on best practices, behavior management
- Liaison between Maryland State Department of Education; District of Columbia Public Schools; MD Department of Juvenile Services; District of Columbia Office

of the State Superintendent of Education, Division of Special Education; Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities and 18 Maryland Local Education Agencies

- Wrote and submitted grants for Title money; Community Outreach and Partnership; Vocational program development; School enrollment and outreach

Good Shepherd Center-Baltimore, MD;

Assistant Principal-Special Education, (9/03 to 7/07)

- Interpreted and maintained up-to-date knowledge of IDEA and COMAR regulations
- Communicated with 18 Maryland Local Education Agencies handling high profile meetings, resolving complaints, and ensuring services are provided
- Site Assessment Coordinator
- Supervised vocational and classified staff ; Represented the Director of Education in his duties in his absence

Teaching Experience:

Paul Laurence Dunbar High School; Lexington, KY

Special Education Teacher (LBD) (8/10- 6/13)

- Taught Learning Strategies resource courses and credit recovery
- Taught collaborative courses in English
- Implemented a piloted program "Move" which focused on transitioning students with mild services needs (executive functioning needs) out of special education
- Extra-curricular: Certified Evaluation Appeals Panel, SBDM, Coordinator of the Leestown Mentorship Program, School Wellness Committee Co-chair, LEAD Conference Liaison, Mentor Teacher

Youth in Transition- Baltimore, MD;

Special Education Teacher/IEP Facilitator (7/02 to 9/03)

- Facilitated IEP meetings with the students from the District of Columbia
- Assisted administrators by assuming leadership role in variety of employer-sponsored extracurricular activities

Paul Laurence Dunbar High School; Lexington, KY;

Special Education Teacher (5/98- 6/02)

- Taught both resources courses in Algebra and Arts and Humanities

- Taught collaborative courses in Algebra, Arts and Humanities, English, Social Studies and Health
- Extra-curricular activities: Senior class sponsor, SBDM Council, United Way Representative, CHAMPS trainer

Professional Development Activities:

Explosive/Noncompliant (CPS) (2001)

Brain-Based Learning (2009)

Safe Crisis Management Trainer (2013)

PBIS Coaching (2013-2014)

FCPS Aspiring Leaders I (2013-2014)

Equity Conference (2013)